

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The United States and Chile negotiated the United States-Chile FTA and United States-Chile ECA in concert, signing the FTA on June 6, 2003, in Miami, USA and the ECA on June 17, 2003, in Santiago, Chile. Article 19.3 of the FTA establishes an Environment Affairs Council (Council). The Council discusses implementation of Chapter 19 of the FTA, and its meetings include a public session. The Joint Commission on Environmental Cooperation (Commission) was established in Article II of the ECA. The Commission evaluates cooperative activities under the ECA, recommends options for improving cooperation, and establishes work programs that reflect national priorities and that identify the scope and focus of environmental cooperation activities. Commission meetings also include a public session.

The Council and Commission last met in August 2015 in Washington, DC. The Council reviewed the implementation of the Environment Chapter of the FTA. The Commission approved the 2015–2017 Work Program, which built on previous successes and identified activities to achieve the long-term goals of: (1) Strengthening effective implementation and enforcement of environmental laws and regulations; (2) encouraging development and adoption of sound environmental practices and technologies, particularly in business enterprises; (3) promoting sustainable development and management of environmental resources, including wild fauna and flora, protected wild areas, and other ecologically important ecosystems; and (4) encouraging civil society participation in the environmental decision-making process and environmental education.

During the Council and Commission meetings, Members will discuss the progress made in implementing Chapter 19 obligations and the impacts of environmental cooperation. The Commission will also finalize an updated Environmental Cooperation Work Program for 2018–2020. More information on the Council and Commission is included below under Supplementary Information.

All interested persons are invited to attend the Council and Commission joint public session beginning at 10:00 a.m. on September 5, 2018, at the Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 180 Teatinos St., Santiago, Chile. Attendees will have an opportunity to ask questions and discuss implementation of Chapter 19 and the ECA with Council and Commission Members and environmental cooperation implementers. At the public session, the

Council will receive input from the public on current environmental issues and ideas for future cooperation. The Department of State and Office of the United States Trade Representative invite written comments or suggestions regarding topics to be discussed at the meeting. In preparing comments, we encourage submitters to refer to Chapter 19 of the FTA and the ECA (*available at <http://www.state.gov/e/oes/eqt/trade/chile/index.htm>*).

If you would like to attend the public session, please notify Keri Holland and Tia Potskhverashvili at the email addresses listed above under the heading **ADDRESSES**. Please include your full name and identify any organization or group you represent. In preparing comments, we encourage submitters to refer to:

- Chapter 19 of the FTA, and
- The ECA.

These documents are available at: <http://www.state.gov/e/oes/eqt/trade/chile/index.htm>. Visit <http://www.state.gov> and the USTR website at [www.ustr.gov](http://www.ustr.gov) for more information.

**Robert D. Wing,**

*Acting Director, Office of Environmental Quality and Transboundary Issues, Department of State.*

[FR Doc. 2018–18242 Filed 8–23–18; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4710–09–P**

## **SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD**

**[Docket No. FD 36209]**

### **Watco Holdings, Inc.—Continuance in Control Exemption—Decatur & Eastern Illinois Railroad, L.L.C.**

Watco Holdings, Inc. (Watco), a noncarrier, has filed a verified notice of exemption pursuant to 49 CFR 1180.2(d)(2) to continue in control of Decatur & Eastern Illinois Railroad, L.L.C. (DEIR), upon DEIR's becoming a Class III rail carrier. Watco owns, indirectly, 100% of the issued and outstanding stock of DEIR, a limited liability company.

This transaction is related to a concurrently filed verified notice of exemption in *Decatur & Eastern Illinois Railroad—Acquisition Exemption Containing Interchange Commitment—CSX Transportation, Inc.*, Docket No. FD 36206, by which DEIR seeks Board approval to acquire and operate approximately 126.7 miles of track owned by CSX Transportation, Inc. (CSXT), consisting of: (1) CSXT's Decatur Subdivision starting near Montezuma, Ind., at milepost BD 192.4 and ending in Decatur, Ill., at milepost BD 277.2; (2) CSXT's Danville

Secondary Subdivision from near Terre Haute, Ind., at milepost QSD 72.2 to near Olivet, Ill., at milepost QSD 113.6; and (3) CSXT's Paris Industrial Track located in Paris, Ill.<sup>1</sup>

The transaction may be consummated on or after September 8, 2018, the effective date of the exemption (30 days after the verified notice of exemption was filed).

According to the verified notice of exemption, Watco currently controls, indirectly, 37 Class III rail carriers and one Class II rail carrier, collectively operating in 27 states. For a complete list of these rail carriers and the states in which they operate, see the August 9, 2018 verified notice of exemption at pages 5–9 for a list of carriers and pages 9–11 for a list of states.<sup>2</sup> The verified notice is available on the Board's website at [www.stb.gov](http://www.stb.gov).

Watco represents that: (1) The rail line to be operated by DEIR does not connect with any of the rail lines operated by railroads in the Watco corporate family; (2) the transaction is not part of a series of anticipated transactions that would result in such a connection; and (3) the transaction does not involve a Class I rail carrier. The proposed transaction is therefore exempt from the prior approval requirements of 49 U.S.C. 11323 pursuant to 49 CFR 1180.2(d)(2).

Watco states that the purpose of the transaction is to reduce overhead expenses and coordinate billing, maintenance, mechanical and personnel policies and procedures of its rail carrier subsidiaries, and thereby improve the overall efficiency of rail service provided by the railroads in the Watco corporate family.

Under 49 U.S.C. 10502(g), the Board may not use its exemption authority to relieve a rail carrier of its statutory obligation to protect the interests of its employees. Because the transaction involves the control of one Class II and one or more Class III rail carriers, the transaction is subject to the labor protection requirements of 49 U.S.C. 11326(b) and *Wisconsin Central Ltd.—Acquisition Exemption—Lines of Union Pacific Railroad*, 2 S.T.B. 218 (1997).

<sup>1</sup> The proposed transaction also includes an ancillary assignment of CSXT's trackage rights over Illinois Central Railroad Company (IC) between the Decatur Street road crossing at or near milepost 77.7 and milepost 76.7 on IC's Peoria Subdivision, including IC's connection with CSXT between milepost 30.5 and milepost 28.6 on IC's Peoria Subdivision, and between IC's lead track from its connection to the Green Switch Spur to IC's connection with the ADM Run-Around-Yard at Decatur, Ill., on IC's Peoria Subdivision, a total distance of approximately 3.6 miles.

<sup>2</sup> The sentence on page 3 of the notice stating that Watco controls 38 Class III railroads and operates in 26 states is inconsistent with the list of carriers and states listed on pages 5–11.

If the verified notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void ab initio. Petitions to revoke the exemption under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) may be filed at any time. The filing of a petition to revoke will not automatically stay the effectiveness of the exemption. Petitions to stay must be filed by August 31, 2018 (at least seven days before the exemption becomes effective).

An original and 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to Docket No. FD 36209, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, 395 E Street SW, Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, one copy of each pleading must be served on Karl Morell, Karl Morell & Associates, Suite 440, 440 1st Street NW, Washington, DC 20001.

Board decisions and notices are available on our website at [www.stb.gov](http://www.stb.gov).

Decided: August 17, 2018.

By the Board.

**Scott M. Zimmerman,**

*Acting Director, Office of Proceedings.*

**Aretha Laws-Byrum,**

*Clearance Clerk.*

[FR Doc. 2018-18125 Filed 8-23-18; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-01-P

## SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

[Docket No. FD 36206]

### Decatur & Eastern Illinois Railroad, L.L.C.—Acquisition Exemption Containing Interchange Commitment—CSX Transportation, Inc.

Decatur & Eastern Illinois Railroad, L.L.C. (DEIR), a noncarrier, has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.31 to acquire and operate approximately 126.7 miles of track (the Line) owned by CSX Transportation, Inc., (CSXT), consisting of: (1) CSXT's Decatur Subdivision starting near Montezuma, Ind., at milepost BD 192.4 and ending in Decatur, Ill., at milepost BD 277.2; (2) CSXT's Danville Secondary Subdivision from near Terre Haute, Ind., at milepost QSD 72.2 to near Olivet, Ill., at milepost QSD 113.6; and (3) CSXT's Paris Industrial Track located in Paris, Ill. As part of the transaction, CSXT will also assign its trackage rights over Illinois Central Railroad Company (IC) between the Decatur Street road crossing at or near milepost 77.7 and milepost 76.7 on IC's Peoria Subdivision, including IC's connection with CSXT between milepost 30.5 and milepost 28.6 on IC's Peoria Subdivision, and between IC's lead track from its connection to the Green Switch Spur to IC's connection with the ADM Run-Around-Yard at

Decatur, Ill., on IC's Peoria Subdivision, a total distance of approximately 3.6 miles.

This transaction is related to a concurrently filed verified notice of exemption in *Watco Holdings, Inc.—Continuance in Control Exemption—Decatur & Eastern Illinois Railroad*, Docket No. FD 36209, in which Watco Holdings, Inc., seeks Board approval to continue in control of DEIR upon DEIR's becoming a Class III rail carrier.

The verified notice states that DEIR and CSXT will enter into a Purchase and Sale Agreement and a Freight Operating Agreement prior to closing, and that DEIR will be the operator of the acquired rail lines. As required by 49 CFR 1150.33(h), DEIR has disclosed in its verified notice that the Freight Operating Agreement contains an interchange commitment that would require DEIR to pay additional compensation to CSXT if DEIR interchanges traffic with a third-party rail carrier and that the affected interchange points are Decatur, Metcalf, and Tuscola, Ill. DEIR has provided additional information pertaining to the interchange commitment as required by § 1150.33(h).<sup>1</sup>

DEIR certifies that its projected annual revenues resulting from the transaction will not exceed those that would qualify it as a Class III rail carrier. However, DEIR states that its projected annual revenues will exceed \$5 million. Accordingly, in compliance with 49 CFR 1150.32(e), on July 6, 2018, DEIR posted the required 60-day labor notice of this transaction at the workplaces of CSXT employees on the affected Line, served notice on the national offices of the labor unions for those employees, and filed a letter with the Board certifying its compliance with the advance notice requirements.

The transaction may be consummated on or after September 8, 2018, the effective date of the exemption (30 days after the verified notice was filed).<sup>2</sup>

If the verified notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void ab initio. Petitions to revoke the exemption under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) may be filed at any time. The filing of a petition to revoke will not

<sup>1</sup> DEIR lists "Canadian National Railway" (CNR) as one of the third-party railroads that could physically interchange with the line sought to be acquired. The Board notes that the correct reference should be to Illinois Central Railroad Company (IC)—the CNR subsidiary over which DEIR will be assigned 3.6 miles of trackage rights (as described above) and the only CNR affiliate operating in the affected region.

<sup>2</sup> The verified notice states that the transaction is expected to be consummated on or about September 6, 2018, however, consummation of the transaction must await the effective date of the exemption.

automatically stay the effectiveness of the exemption. Petitions to stay must be filed no later than August 31, 2018 (at least seven days before the exemption becomes effective).

An original and 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to Docket No. FD 36206, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, 395 E Street SW, Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, a copy must be served on Karl Morell, Karl Morell & Associates, Suite 440, 440 1st Street NW, Washington, DC 20001.

According to DEIR, this action is categorically excluded from environmental review under 49 CFR 1105.6(c).

Board decisions and notices are available on our website at [www.stb.gov](http://www.stb.gov).

Decided: August 17, 2018.

By the Board.

**Scott M. Zimmerman,**

*Acting Director, Office of Proceedings.*

**Aretha Laws-Byrum,**

*Clearance Clerk.*

[FR Doc. 2018-18119 Filed 8-23-18; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-01-P

## OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

[Docket Number USTR-2018-0029]

### Request for Comments To Compile the National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers

**AGENCY:** Office of the United States Trade Representative.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) publishes the National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers (NTE Report) each year. The Trade Policy Staff Committee (TPSC) invites interested persons to submit written comments to assist the TPSC in identifying significant barriers to U.S. exports of goods and services, U.S. foreign direct investment, and the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights for inclusion in the NTE Report. USTR also will consider responses to this notice as part of the annual review of the operation and effectiveness of all U.S. trade agreements regarding telecommunications products and services that are in force with respect to the United States.

**DATES:** We must receive all written comments no later than 11:59 p.m. on October 30, 2018.

**ADDRESSES:** USTR strongly prefers electronic submissions made through